2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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his father or mother and still discover later that she was related to him. The Boy's own experience illustrates this. The Boy is an Upper Quarters as was his father, and his mother was a Frozen. It so happened that his mother's father was one of three brothers who were Frozens. The grandson of one of these three brothers married a Bad Plenty and stayed with his wife's band so long a time that he was known as a member of the Bad Plenty and his children took that affiliation. The Boy married one of the daughters of this family, a woman known as a member of the Bad Plenty. Only after several years of married life did they one day discover that The Boy had married his maternal grandfather's brother's great-granddaughter! Charles Buckman, whose father was a white man, and whose mother, a Bad Plenty, later married a Water Horses man, took Charles there to live, and he claimed affiliation with the latter band. He married a Bad Plenty woman, however, and discovered years later that his wife was remotely related to him on his mother's side. It seems certain that in former times, when the bands were functioning, an Upper Quarters would not marry an Upper Quarters, that is, that an individual would not marry into his own band; but beyond this, apparently only known blood and most types of affinal relationship were bars to marriage.

Within the band, close relatives usually camped in proximity, whether residence was matrilocal or patrilocal. The general consensus of opinion among our informants was that most of the persons within a band were related to each other. Band members would not wager against each other for high stakes in gambling, and sometimes the whole band might become involved as a unit in case of blood revenge.

Chief or Leader

The term "chief" was employed to designate any man who had distinguished himself in war.[4] Each band then might have several or many such "chiefs," but among them would be one recognized as leader, "he who takes us around," that is, the one who directed the band when it moved from place to place.[5] This function seems

[4] The Gros Ventre term is *nätcă* (m. s.) *näkyä* (w. s.). For linguistic shift between men's and women's speech, see Flannery, 1946, pp. 133–34.

[5] The Gros Ventre term is *ninä'ninänä:titc* (m. s.). Kroeber, 1908,

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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622 to have been the primary one of the leader. He decided where to go and when, in order to hunt, to seek lodge covers, to gather berries, to cut new tent- and travois-poles, and so on. He invited people, prominent men of his own band and of other bands, and fed [514] people every day. He would have provisions on hand and was prepared to carry out extensive hospitality. He would be one who had plenty of buffalo horses which younger men—his sons and nephews—would use on the hunt, and numerous pack horses which returned from the hunt laden with meat. His wives would invite old women, and especially needy ones, to help slice meat, prepare it for storage, to render grease and extract marrow, all of which these old women were glad to do in return for some fresh meat.

622 555 As explained by The Boy, a man had to work up from the ranks, so to speak, to be recognized as chief and as leader. "It paid to be prosperous and a good man. In the course of time people would look up to him as leader and other bands would be told that he is the leader. He does not ask for this distinction but, if he is prosperous and good, people recognize him. The band gets together and tells him: 'You are our leader.' He holds 'office' for life. As he grows old he might tell the people to select someone else, but, even so, they would continue to look up to him and to ask his advice and consult him. There are obstacles in the path of life, and one who would rise must walk around or over them. To be an acknowledged leader a man must have distinguished himself at war, but many who were known for their brave deeds were not necessarily in line for leadership.[8] The kinds of things which would have prevented a man from receiving this type of recognition were the following. First of all, murder of one of his own band. For instance there was a well-known character who had

p. 147, mentions that "Each band seems to have had a recognized chief or leader."

[8] Denig, whose experience with the northern plains tribes extended from 1832 to 1854, expresses, p. 403, the concept as follows: "In fact the rank or standing of each Indian be he chief or warrior is so well known and his character so well judged by the vox populi that he takes his place spontaneously. A higher step than his acts and past conduct confer, imprudently taken, would have the effect of injuring him in their eyes as a leader. Every chief, warrior or brave carves his own way to fame, and if recognized as one by the general voice becomes popular and is supported; if not he mixes with hundreds of others in similar situation and waiting opportunity to rise."

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an outstanding war record, was known to be courageous and not afraid to die, yet, because he was quick-tempered and murdered a member of his own band, he forfeited what would have been a very good chance of becoming leader of his band. Second, a man who had the reputation of being woman-crazy, of bothering other men's wives, or who was guilty of rape or incest, would not be selected as leader. Furthermore, a man who wished to rise should control his temper, be good to others and avoid lying, back-biting and jealousy in regard to other prominent men. If he had these qualities, and was eminent at war, he would rise high in public esteem and be in the running not only as a leader of a band, or of the whole tribe, but also as Keeper of one of the Sacred Pipes."[1]

It was further explained by this same informant, The Boy, that if the leader died, there was a lot of talk both by members and non-members as to who was qualified to succeed. Those outside the band speculated on whom the choice would fall and said: "It ought to be so-and-so," and in this way attempt to influence the opinion as to which of the outstanding men of the band had the best qualifications. Soon a certain man became the leader, and once he was invited to a meeting of other band leaders he was "full-fledged."

In carrying out his duties, that is, in deciding when and where to move, the leader consulted with others and proceeded in a democratic fashion. If two or more bands were camped together, for instance, the leaders would consult among themselves and come to a decision as to whether or not the bands should remain together and as to where they should go. Other men would be present and any one of them apparently had the privilege of speaking his mind. "Suppose that the leader had decided that his band should leave the other and go to some particular spot. Someone in his band who disagreed with the decision would speak up and raise the question of, say, danger from the enemy. He would suggest a different place free from such danger and where game would be plentiful, where there was a good camping ground and sufficient water for the horses, etc. He would give his reasons in detail, and, if it

[1] The role of the Keepers of the Flat and Feathered Pipes is discussed in detail in Cooper, Ms. 1949.

seemed that the others present agreed with him, the leader would give in and have the crier announce the revised decision."

On the march, the leader went at the head of his band and showed the way. When several bands were together, the leader of one would have decided where he intended to go, and, if the other bands had decided to go along with this one, they followed, but were free to break away at any time.

The band to which either the Keeper of the Flat Pipe or the Keeper of the Feathered Pipe belonged had a certain distinction as there was a tendency when the tribe split for each to have a considerable following.

According to tradition, as related by The Boy, the Gros Ventres had had in the fairly remote past a formally selected chief or leader of the whole tribe. It was said that he functioned when the whole tribe was together and that his decisions in important matters were made in consultation with the chief men, including the leaders of all the bands. There was no regular council and anyone present might express his opinion. Often the Keepers of the Sacred Pipes were present at such meetings called by the tribal chief, but if they were not present they were supposed to be kept advised.

The last regularly selected leader of the whole tribe was said to have been White Eagle, who held this position in the last decades of the eighteenth century. It was said further that White Eagle was preceded by White Shield, of whom there are many stories extant, and that White Shield was preceded by Elk Going Against The Wind. The Boy gave the following information regarding the "election" of White Eagle. The account was given to The Boy by his father, Lame Bull, who had it from Old Man Gopher, a cousin of Lame Bull's paternal grandfather. "The Gros Ventres had been badly decimated by smallpox and only about 30 lodges were left.[8] Old Man Gopher and his sister, both of them very young children at the time, were the only survivors of their family. The old men among the survivors of the tribe got together and proceeded to choose a chief. White Eagle was then a young man

[8] A reasonable chronological estimate would identify this as a tradition referring to the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1780. For historical data, see p. 9.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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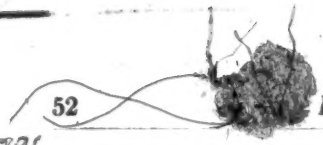
position. In depositing the bundle on its bed, she would lower it gently in three stages, spitting at each one.

When the people were staying for any length of time at a given camp site, the Flat Pipe bundle, which was always kept inside the keeper's lodge during the night time, would regularly in good weather be taken out early in the morning at breakfast time by the co-keeper, with the customary grasping and carrying ritual, and hung up, stem-end pointing east just over the door of the keeper's lodge, not on its tripod. The outside of the keeper's lodge around the door up to full reaching height, about 6 or 7 feet, was painted red. The thong handle of the bundle was looped over, the two projecting ends of a stout pin, skewered horizontally in the tent cover, on the immediate line above the door at the upper edge of the red-painted area.

The bundle would hang over the door all day until about sundown when it would be brought back into the lodge for the night. In bringing it back, the co-keeper walked out of the lodge, unhooked and grasped the bundle, turned clockwise, walked all around the lodge clockwise, entered the lodge, proceeded clockwise to the incense hearth, dipped the stem end of the bundle three times in the smudge, and deposited the bundle in the usual ritual manner, as above described, at the far north end of the Pipe bed.

The final decision as to when and whether the camp, in which the Flat Pipe chanced to be, was to be moved was made by the head man especially the band chiefs and in the olden days the tribal chief too, the keepers having perhaps taken the initiative in calling them together. They would notify the Pipe keeper. Early the next morning the co-keeper with the usual ritual observances would take the Pipe bundle from its bed and carry it and its tripod outside the lodge a little to the north thereof, set up the tripod and hang the bundle on it. The tripod would be set up with two of its legs closer together, and with the third leg stretched out farther, its upper end projecting a little beyond the junction of the three legs. On this projecting end the bundle was hung by the thong handle looped over the end. On other occasions the bundle was hung on the tripod stem-end pointing east. But on this occasion the rule was superseded by another, namely, the third leg



796 178 [688] sing a song out of the prescribed order, the "chiefs" would stop them at once, announce the mistake and what fine was to be demanded of the singers. Were the four women singers performing at that time, they too were penalized.

[534] The owners of the drumsticks cooperated with the owner of the drum whose special duty it was to care for this instrument and to have it in repair and ready for use at any time it was needed.

The concepts pertaining to the crow-belts, spoon, fork and whistle remained unchanged. The owners of these regalia treated them with the same respect as of old. Additional ceremonial equipment had been introduced in the form of four feathered warbonnets, two of which were owned by men and two by women. There was a special little ceremony connected with the two bonnets owned by women. Early in the dance two outstanding warriors were selected to take these bonnets from their owners, dance four times around the rack where they were hung in front of their owners, and then hand them to the first two women sitting at the left of the door. When it was time to dance these women would don them and wear them throughout that dance, then pass them on to the next two, and so on, until everyone had had a chance to wear them.

796 178 624 Finally, there were two announcers, one who called out what he was directed to say by any of the men, and the other who publicized any statement to be made on behalf of the women.

All of these individuals were considered as office-holders in the Grass dance and, as formerly, each was free to transfer the office [622] to anyone he considered suitable to succeed himself. There was no regular term of office even for the "chiefs" and the transfer was described as purely voluntary. Apparently, however, there was a certain amount of consultation among the officers, when one of them decided to transfer his office, in order to agree on a well-qualified successor. Among other things it was necessary to consider the financial status of the individual, especially for those to take over the higher offices. Not only did the recipient heap property upon the donor, but according to the older pattern too, [431] the relatives of the recipient would give away horses and so on

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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in his honor, and there were certain obligations connected with some of the offices in the newer form of the Grass dance, such as payment for the privilege by the black-dress wearers of being invited to come near the fire in the center and eat dog flesh. Furthermore a new "chief" would almost without exception provide the wherewithal for a whole dance to show that he was worthy of the office.

The procedure of transfer was similar for each office. If, for instance, one of the four "chiefs" had decided he had held this position long enough, at one of the dances he would order the transferring song to be sung. He, together, with the other three, would rise and dance around more or less deliberately and in a dignified manner. When these four reached the man who was to receive the office, each of the other three would make a motion toward the recipient as though helping him to his feet, while the donor himself would actually take his hand and assist him to arise. They then led him around the dancing place and finally installed the new officer in the place of honor vacated by the donor. It was customary, as the donor approached the region where the recipient was sitting, for everyone in the vicinity to bow his head as though making himself inconspicuous. None of them was supposed to know ahead of time on whom the choice would fall and, according to Gros Ventre etiquette, it would be very bad form for anyone to seem eager to receive an office, or any kind of honor for that matter.

Changes in procedure. In this later period the Grass dance was held sometimes out of doors in a circular space enclosed by wagons, at other times in a large log building, the ground plan of which was as nearly round as it could be made. It was remarked in this connection that the modern rectangular community hall at Hays, on the Reservation, was no good for Gros Ventre ceremonies, including the Grass dance, "because everything we did was in a circle." The present almost circular community hall at Lodge Pole is considered much more satisfactory. The seating arrangements were very similar to those described for

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The addition of the four "chiefs" of the Grass dance gave scope for public recognition of the middle-aged men of substance esteemed for their wisdom and judgment to whom office-holding proportionate for their dignity was otherwise denied. Although there was no longer opportunity for the ranks of warriors to swell, those who had in the past performed brave deeds could still gain status by being called upon to publicly recount them at the ceremonial eating of dog flesh and by being selected to handle the feathered bonnets.

As the younger men had no chance to show their prowess in warfare and hunting, there was a change of emphasis to recognition of superior singing and dancing ability as one of the roads to public approval. This latter was brought out clearly by our informants when explaining the qualifications of those sought for the various officers of the Grass dance as it was performed around the turn of the century.

They stated that much of the success of the performance of the Grass dance depended particularly on the singers of the dog ritual songs. The four singers who owned the ceremonial drumsticks were chosen for their good voices and from among the "lively men who liked to do things." The candidates did not have to know the songs in advance because they could be trained. Two noted teachers were The Boy and Joe Big Beaver. The Boy said he used to "campaign against himself" when it was time for a drumstick to be transferred because "he didn't want to get tied down. He enjoyed dancing and the singers never got a chance to participate." Our informants told us of two men who are remembered especially as being outstanding singers and drummers, Ed Rider and Breath. The latter was described as a top-ranking singer who, so far as they knew, had never been surpassed. They said: "It was something worth listening to when Breath started those Grass dance songs. He had a voice adapted to that kind of singing and his sense of rhythm was superb. He could hold a big crowd of people spellbound. He was a real genius. Many others tried to copy him and learn from him, but none ever succeeded in equalling him. Regardless of his fine voice no one